

Given the foregoing, will obviously desirable to have a system which is not necessarily dependent upon the existing communications network system to operate.

It is object of the present invention to address the above problems, at least to
5 provide the consumer with the useful choice.

Further objects of the present invention will now become apparent from the following description which is given by way of example only.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a data capture
10 device which includes a data capture means, and

a data output,

the data capture device characterised in that it includes

a processing means that to process the captured data into a format suitable for communication through the data output.

According to other aspects of the present there is provided a monitoring system which includes at least one data capture device as described above.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of operating a data capture device characterised by the steps of:

15 a) capturing data, and

- b) processing the data to a format suitable for communication to another component in a monitoring system, and
- c) outputting the processed data

Reference for the majority of the specification will be made to the data capture device as being a digital video camera (DVC). It should be appreciated however that the principles of the present invention may apply to other data capture devices, for example a digital audio device such as an intercom.

In preferred embodiments of the present invention, the camera may include a memory or storage device to record selected data. This has a number of advantages.

One advantage is that if the main communication network crashes, data can be held within the camera to be accessed when the network is running again.

In preferred embodiments the camera is configured so it is capable of operating independently of the servers on the communications network. This independent configuration may include separate power supplies, separate processing and memory devices.

The selected data may be any data that is useful in terms of the security system.

For example, the data may be the last information received over a certain time period. There may be a continual memory loop with old data being written over by new data.

Selected data may in some embodiments be a record of certain events which meet certain selection criteria and happened over a period of time.

For example, any event or alarm (of logical combination of events of alarms) may trigger the storage of appropriate data (whether visual, audio or otherwise).

5 Examples of typical events are:

- The person being granted access at a door with a card reader;
- The person being denied access at a door with a card reader;
- The contact on a reed switch opening to indicate that a door has opened;
- The contact on a reed switch opening to indicate that a window has opened;

10 • The motion detected by a camera;

- The motion detected by a passive infra-red (PIR) detector;
- A glass break detector detecting a glass break;
- A person speaking into an intercom.

An alarm is a type of event that is deemed to be out of the normal. A controller
15 may have part of its processing capability, information to allow it to determine whether an event is an alarm based on the following criteria;

- The source of the event (e.g. from which peripheral device the event was detected).
- The type of the event (e.g. contact open or contact closed)